



Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent of Schools

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June 5, 2013

Betty Weller  
President  
Maryland State Education Association (MSEA)  
140 Main Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Ms. Weller:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated June 5, 2013, on behalf of MSEA. The letter delineates the perspectives of MSEA regarding the clarification of the path forward for Teacher and Principal Evaluation (TPE) in Maryland. I sent this clarification via email on June 4, 2013, to Maryland Superintendents, Maryland State Education Association leadership, and the Governor's Policy Director.

The path set forth in the June 4, 2013, email represents the option that the United States Department of Education (USDE) offered relative to the approved 20% use of state assessments in TPEs. The request for flexibility in the use of state assessments was a result of statewide discussions as summarized in the April 12, 2013, email from David Helfman, Executive Director of MSEA; and the May 6, 2013, email from Dr. Carl Roberts, Executive Director of PSSAM. Dr. Roberts' summary was based on the consensus of the Superintendents, MSEA state leadership, and MSEA affiliate leaders. The May 6, 2013, email confirmed:

Maryland school system superintendents previously endorsed and continue to endorse the following statements and beliefs:

- Twenty-two school systems that are included in the Maryland Race-to-the-Top (RTTT) Grant support seeking flexibility from the US Dept of Education on the 20% component required in local teacher/principal evaluation models. The language accepted is:
  - o *The model has a 20 percent assessment component. In statewide tested subjects and grades, at least 10 percent is the MSA with the remainder of the 20 percent consisting of an MSA-based performance index.*
- Twenty-four school systems acknowledge that the two non-RTTT school systems (Montgomery & Frederick) are not included in the short-term flexibility remedy proposed since all were advised by Dr. Lowery on April 5, 2013, that those non-RTTT school systems had an additional year to submit a local T/P Evaluation proposal.
- Given that the second ESEA Waiver Application is due during the 2013/2014 school year for consideration by the US Dept of Education for school years 2014-2016, superintendents have been assured of the following:

- In the fall of 2013, Dr. Lowery will commence a thorough and transparent process to evaluate the content of the initial ESEA Flexibility Waiver and through research and discussion regarding effective practices, identify the content of the second ESEA Flexibility Waiver that is supportive of high quality teaching and learning in all Maryland public schools.

To facilitate the “10 (MSA classroom-level data)/10 (SPI) Split” for which Superintendents and MSEA members have advocated since July 2012 and to maintain the integrity of the approved 20% application of state assessments (MSA and/or PARCC), the following TPE transition plan was offered:

SY 2013-14	10%/10% Split
SY 2014-15	15%/5% Split
SY 2015-16	20% MSA and/or PARCC

While not necessarily appropriate for all LEAs, this path may provide a suitable option to mitigate apprehension as the State begins full implementation of the Common Core Standards during School Year 2013-14. The TPE transition plan gradually increases the evaluative significance of state assessments over time and allows teachers to acquire greater confidence and familiarity with the Common Core State Standards and the changeover from the MSA to PARCC assessments.

The December 6, 2012, letter from USDE clearly stated the expectations relative to the full implementation of the Maryland TPE Plan for School Year 2013-2014, including quantitative measures that incorporate at least 20% of state assessments in grades and subjects where these assessments are required. The TPE transition plan holds Maryland to that expectation and is further evidence of good faith and flexibility on USDE’s part. You have my personal assurance that we will continue to collaborate as is documented in Dr. Roberts’ May 6, 2013, email relative to the ESEA Waiver. Beginning in the fall with published guidance from USDE, we will capitalize on lessons learned and actual data gleaned from the experiences of the full implementation of TPE with the purpose of making adjustments to the Maryland waiver and its component parts that are based upon the best available evidence at each decision point.

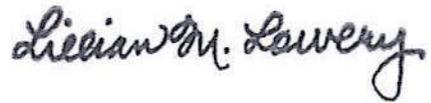
As we have discussed before, the State was afforded two years to prepare for TPE implementation. During School Year 2011-12, seven districts piloted and shared results of selected components of the TPE. Then during the 2012-13 school year, all districts piloted local or state TPE models, some more comprehensively than others. During School Year 2012-13, the TPE team and the Curriculum and Instruction staff worked in districts across the state to ensure that all State Department of Education work and decisions were grounded in voices from the field. Further, data have been collected relative to educator ratings so that we can determine the differentiated levels of effectiveness.

Finally, during the April 2013 PSSAM meeting which followed the MSEA-convened district and MSEA-affiliate meeting, and based on the consensus of district leaders and teachers, we all agreed to extend the submission date from May 15, 2013, to June 7, 2013. Two local options were known possibilities: an option with the use of 20% state assessments or an option with the use of the 10%/10% Split, dependent on our ongoing discussions with USDE. Depending on the result of those ongoing discussions, district and MSEA-affiliate leaders were aware that two options were possibilities and that we all had to be positioned to react quickly to the final outcome. However, since the transition plan allows for the option of the 10%/10% Split during School Year 2013-14, we are on target for either

possibility. As to defaulting to an amended state model, LEAs (local education agencies) can either defer to an amended model or adopt the current state model as their local model.

All local plans are due on Friday, June 7, 2013, or districts will default to the state model. Please do not hesitate to contact me if my staff or I can be of further assistance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lillian M. Lowery".

Lillian M. Lowery, Ed. D.  
State Superintendent of Schools  
Maryland State Department of Education

c David A. Volrath,  
MSDE TPE Lead